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Who'll 'Chicken Out'?

"We must be resolute, and stick by our principles" the western diplomats keep saying, with reference to our stand on Berlin. The last to say it was British Foreign Minister Selwyn Lloyd, on arrival in Washington to confer with American and French foreign ministers on the Berlin crisis.

The manner in which they keep repeating the statement, "We must be resolute," suggests that they are afraid somebody on our side will "chicken out" if Khrushchev threatens war.

The three ministers, who are supposedly laying a foundation for the meeting with Russia's foreign minister on May 11, are now being joined by the rest of the ministers from the 15-nation organization NATO. The larger group is just as concerned as the Big Three over German incidents that might mean war, even though they will not all be invited to the summit.

"If the West is resolute, then I believe that the Soviet Union—by hook or crook—will be the one to back down." This estimate, made by the deputy director of intelligence for the U.S. Central Intelligence Agency in a radio publicized speech a few days ago, appears to be the most authoritative intelligence analysis made public as the North Atlantic Treaty Organization allies meet to discuss German reunification and the Russian threat to Berlin.

The speech, made from notes and not carried by the press association wires, was reported in the Columbia, S.C. "The State." Robert Amory Jr., assistant to C.I.A. Director Allen W. Dulles, told a University of South Carolina study group that the Soviet Union is not ready to risk a major nuclear war over Berlin, but that Soviet Premier Khrushchev "expects to force us to chicken out."

The newspaper account of the talk has been confirmed for accuracy by Amory. He said that the Russians "haven't got what it takes rationally to challenge us this spring." The future remains in doubt, but, says Amory, in the next 15 years the West faces "a race for leadership in the world against militant Communists with fervent faith."

The report of Amory's speech lends additional significance to the statement made by President Eisenhower about the same time. In his press conference, March 11, the President said with great firmness: "We are certainly not going to fight a ground war in Europe."

Against the import of the Amory speech, the President's statement must be interpreted as indicating that the Western allies will not back down on Berlin in the face of a Russian threat of nuclear war. The reasoning is that any such threat would be essentially, as Amory has indicated, a bluff. Nonetheless, in Amory's view, the Russians are negotiating from confidence. "The goal," he said, "is to take over Berlin (identified as a 'needle' to the Reds because of its high pro-Western living standards) and consolidate East Germany. They think they hold the trumps because their action is peaceful. It's a case of 'here we go, here they come'."

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